



More info about the company at: www.thermik.de



Thermik's new company building in Sonderhausen

FOTOS: THERMIK

New Home Found



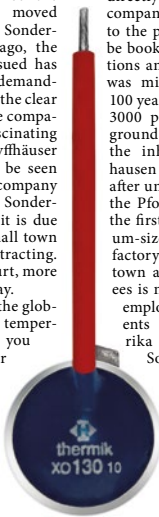
Research and development have an extremely high priority for Thermik

- Thermik took down its tents in Pforzheim three years ago
- Productivity at the Thuringia site has increased considerably

LOTHAR H. NEFF | SONDRSHAUSEN

According to the legend, Emperor Barbarossa has been asleep in Kyffhäuser for centuries. Meanwhile a great deal has happened in the region. According to an American study, Thuringia is one of the most innovative economic locations in Western Europe. This is also confirmed by the entrepreneur from Pforzheim, Marcel Hofsaess. „Since the company Thermik moved from Pforzheim to Sonderhausen three years ago, the number of patents issued has tripled.“ Creativity is demanded. „Maybe because of the clear Thuringia air,“ says the company's boss – of the fascinating view across the Kyffhäuser landscape, which can be seen from the newly built company building high above Sonderhausen. But perhaps it is due to the fact that the small town is not exactly very distracting. The nearest city is Erfurt, more than 50 kilometres away.

Thermik used to be the global market leader for temperature limiters. „But you mustn't rest on your laurels,“ says the boss. Which is why the management decided to move to a forward-looking location in 2010. „We wanted to be even better and more profitable.“



Small but enormously important: a temperature limiter from Thermik

The location ultimately chosen was Thuringia. At the same time, an American study „Global Best of Invest Ranking 2010“ found that the eastern German federal state was the best investment location in Germany and Western Europe. „We came to the same conclusion, especially as we were able to utilise 20 years of production experience in Sonderhausen.“ Only selected managers in Pforzheim and Sonderhausen were involved in the planning, confirms Hofsaess. This was the only way to ensure a smooth relocation and ultimately a merger of the two Thermik sites in a record time of just one month. „Initially, our customers had no idea until we wrote to them on new headed paper from Thuringia.“

The most historical sight is the Residenzschloss palace – directly next to the Thermik company there is a mine open to the public, which can also be booked for family celebrations and parties. Potash salt was mined here for almost 100 years – until 1991. Nearly 3000 people worked underground here then. Many of the inhabitants of Sonderhausen migrated to the West after unification. By contrast, the Pforzheim company was the first West German medium-sized company to open a factory in the former potash town and with 140 employees is now one of the largest employers. His grandparents and his mother, Ulrika Hofsaess, come from Sonderhausen.

Thermik GmbH

The company Thermik Gerätebau was founded in 1968 by the inventor Peter Hofsaess in Pforzheim. Today the company, with its head offices in Sonderhausen (Thuringia) has subsidiaries in Malaysia, the USA and Romania. Overall the Thermik Group employs 600 people. The Asian region supplies the company in Malaysia, which was founded in 1992 – when the whole world was betting on China. The legal certainty resulting from its links with the Commonwealth were crucial for this decision. „Production costs were considerably lower in China than in Malaysia at the time – but today they are definitely higher,“ stresses company boss Marcel Hofsaess. The development in Romania is also positive. As a result of the relocation to Sonderhausen, Pforzheim lost 100 jobs. *ne*

„The people here do not see me as a stranger, but as someone returning to their grandparents' home.“

In 1991 Thermik took over a semi-conductor company in Jena. „As a result of the synergy effects, a quantum leap was possible in the design of temperature limiters,“ according to the company's history.

There are 430 kilometres from the Pforzheim to Sonderhausen. Only a dozen employees from Pforzheim's Attefall industrial estate accepted the offer continue employment and relocated to Sonderhausen. Even after 30 years this was not an easy decision for most of them. Almost 100 employees remained in Pforzheim and were given re-

„Strategically and economically the right decision for Thermik“

Wolfgang Daum, Chairman of the Works Council

„Nothing has got worse as a result of the relocation, but lots has got even better“

Marcel Hofsaess, Thermik CEO

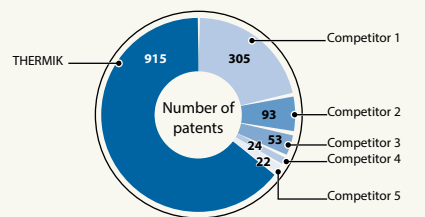
ple were being drawn to the top companies in the two technology centres. One of Thermik's largest competitors is also located in Pforzheim. „Recruiting defectors is not reconcilable with our corporate philosophy,“ explains Hofsaess

Protection against overheating
Whether at work or at home – several dozen temperature limiters protect the functioning of electrical devices every day – they are found in fans, cooling systems, pumps, coffee machines and hair dryers. Despite the globally high demand for temperature limiters, there are relatively few renowned manufacturers.

They are designed to provide protection against overheating without systems being switched off too early. The technical challenge lies in mastering ever larger output in ever smaller spaces and keeping control of the costs. „We have not raised our prices for three years, despite increasing material costs, and still earn more.“ This has only been possible through a massive increase in productivity.

Customers across Europe are supplied from the Thermik plant in Sonderhausen. Delivery times and costs were reduced as a result of the relocation. Thermik has been one of the top 100 most innovative medium-sized companies in Germany for the last four years. And the credit rating agency Creditreform even includes the company among the 1.7 percent of all companies in the country with the best credit rating. The Thermik Group has been expanding since 1997 independently of the banks. Nevertheless, Marcel Hofsaess does not need to go without expert advice: the chairman of the Works Council is Wolfgang Daum, the former chairman of Sparkasse Pforzheim Calw.

THERMIK COMPARED TO THE COMPETITION



as at 15.05.2014

SOURCE: DPMA

dundancy packages. „It was important for us that the managers came with us,“ stresses Hofsaess. As a result of the new recruits, the average age fell from 50 to 37.

Finding the experts was easy, assures the Thermik boss. Around 50 percent of the Pforzheim employees had joined as apprentices, in Thuringia 90 percent are experts.

The imposing new building cost Euro seven million, which with its glass facade shapes the hill above the „Glück auf“ visitors' centre at the mine. Building permission was granted after two weeks, emphasises Hofsaess. He never experienced that sort of support from the city council in Pforzheim. „In return I had to install a disabled toilet in

the management offices, even though there were no disabled people.“

The investment in the new head offices in Thuringia paid off after just two years.

Shortage of experts

This new direction would not have been possible at the old home in Pforzheim for various reasons. There was a shortage of experts and no willingness for new thinking. It needed to be a German-speaking location, which was also close to universities and technical universities in order to overcome the shortage of engineers. The sandwich location between Stuttgart and Karlsruhe was problematic for Pforzheim because the best peo-